

For More Information:

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**LOCAL NONPROFIT OFFERS SHORT TERM, INTEREST FREE MORTGAGE ASSISTANCE  
TO HELP UNEMPLOYED HOMEOWNERS PREVENT FORECLOSURES**

Mill Cities Community Investments (MCCI), a nonprofit in Lowell, Massachusetts, is helping unemployed homeowners prevent foreclosure with a privately-funded interest-free loan program.

No income caps apply. Unemployed or underemployed homeowners living in Lowell, Acton, Billerica, Carlisle, Chelmsford, Dracut, Tewksbury, Tyngsboro or Westford are the primary focus of the fund but others may be considered. Applicants are required to participate in foreclosure prevention services offered by the Lowell-based Coalition for a Better Acre's Home Preservation Center, including one-on-one financial counselling sessions.

According to MCCI Executive Director Frank Carvalho, "The program provides temporary mortgage payment assistance for unemployed or underemployed homeowners. It is unique in that it fills a gap that other programs don't fill. It is an exciting and visionary program."

Not a government program, the loan fund is made possible through the efforts and contributions of a local Carlisle family whose long-term vision is to catalyze a statewide grass-roots movement for similar community-based foreclosure prevention efforts. The donor family believes that by setting an example of how investing in people can help both households and communities maintain economic stability, they can encourage other individuals in Massachusetts to similarly invest in their own communities.

The maximum loan amount is \$20,000, carries no interest, and is disbursed to homeowners in monthly payments to help them make ends meet. Borrowers are expected to begin repaying the loans once they are re-employed and 60 days after the loan disbursements end.

The program is already making an impact. For example, in November 2010, John (not his real name) was laid off from his job at a local defense industry employer, where he had been making in a mid-six figure salary. Although he received unemployment assistance, it only covered 75% of his mortgage payments. To make ends meet, John was forced to withdraw funds from his personal savings, and worried about how long this could last.

In April, 2011, MCCI granted John a loan of \$20,000, disbursing it in monthly payments that allowed him to pay his mortgage without depleting his savings and to keep his good credit standing--a must since he hoped to become employed in the defense industry again. Then able to support his family and meet his financial obligations, this loan gave John the peace of mind he needed to focus on finding a new job.

After nearly a year of unemployment, John secured a new job in his field and started working again. Following the plan he made with MCCI, John is now refinancing his mortgage to lower his payments and will begin to repay the loan to MCCI in February of 2012.

Homeowners who would like to learn more about the program are urged to contact MCCI for more information. MCCI is a community development financial institution whose mission is to “advance community revitalization and development in the Merrimack Valley by providing appropriate loan programs and technical assistance.” MCCI also provides mortgage products for low and moderate-income first-time homebuyers, rehab loans for homeowners, and refinancing assistance to at-risk homeowners when possible. For more information, contact MCCI at 978-970-0600, Ext. 5.